

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 6481

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GR, CY, TU, US
SUBJECT: FOREIGN RELATIONS: REACTIONS CONTINUE TO SENATE
EMBARGO VOTE

REF: ATHENS 6419

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: THE SENATE VOTE TO LIFT THE TURKISH ARMS
EMBARGO CONTINUED TO BE A DOMINANT STORY IN THE GREEK PRESS
JULY 28. THE PRINCIPAL THEME, WHICH WAS OBVIOUSLY BASED ON
BACKGROUNDING BY A GOG SPOKESMAN, CLAIMED THE GOG IS DIRECTING
ITS EFFORTS AT OBTAINING US GUARANTEES FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
IN THE AEGEAN. SEVERAL PAPERS SUGGEST ANY "GUARANTEE" MUST COME
FROM THE CONGRESS TO BE EFFECTIVE. PRO-GOVERNMENT VRADYNI AND
KATHIMERINI HEADLINED THEIR STORIES "GREECE HAS ASKED FOR
GUARANTEES IN THE AEGEAN" AND "GREECE DEMANDS GUARANTEES FOR
PEACE IN THE AEGEAN FROM THE USA," RESPECTIVELY. OPPOSITION
TO VIMA'S HEADLINE READ "THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS 'GUARANTEES' FROM
THE CONGRESS OVER THE 'EMBARGO'" WHILE ITS SISTER PAPER TA NEA
PROCLAIMED "'GUARANTEES' AS A COUNTER-BALANCE TO THE EMBARGO..."
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2. HEADLINING ITS STORY "MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN SO THAT THE
BALANCE IN THE AEGEAN WILL NOT BE DISTURBED," PRO-GOVERNMENT
AKROPOLIS SAID THAT "THE GREEK GOVERNMENT IS PROCEEDING AT AN
UNRELENTING PACE WITH ACTIONS AIMED AT UNDERLINING THE THREAT
TO THE PEACE WHICH WOULD BE CREATED IN OUR AREA AS A RESULT OF
THE EVENTUAL LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO." IT ATTRIBUTED THE REMARKS

TO A WELL-INFORMED SOURCE WHO, HOWEVER, DID NOT SPELL OUT THE NATURE OR CONTENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN ANY DETAIL. THE ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT IT WAS "CONSIDERED CERTAIN" THAT TWO POINTS WOULD BE STRESSED BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. FIRST, THAT LIFTING THE EMBARGO WOULD NOT HELP SOLVE THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND, SECOND, THAT SHOULD THE EMBARGO FINALLY BE LIFTED THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS OBLIGATED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES SO THAT THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY IS NOT DISTURBED.

3. THE PROVISION OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT WHICH LINKS GREECE AND CYPRUS WITH TURKEY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORTS WAS UNANIMOUSLY CRITICIZED EDITORIALY FOR PUTTING GREECE AND TURKEY ON "THE SAME LEVEL". KATHIMERINI RECALLED EDITORIALY THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT HAD SPOKEN OF "REPERCUSSIONS" AND THAT THE FIRST SUCH REPERCUSSION WAS THE ECEVIT STATEMENT IN WHICH THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER ASSERTED THE NEXT STEP IS UP TO GREECE AND THAT THE SENATE HAD, FOR THE FIRST TIME, LINKED GREECE DIRECTLY WITH THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. KATHIMERINI ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER, WHO HAD "MOVED HEAVEN AND EARTH" TO LIFT THE EMBARGO, "TO ASK FOR THE REIMPOSITION OF THE EMBARGO OWING TO THE INTRANSIGENCE OF HIS TURKISH ALLY?" VRADYNI, REFERRING TO THE ECEVIT STATEMENT, ASKED WHETHER ANKARA HAD "TRULY DONE SO VERY MANY THINGS IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS TO CHANGE THE FAIT ACCOMPLI IN CYPRUS, SO THAT WHAT REMAINS NOW IS ONLY TO EXPECT INITIATIVES FROM THE OTHER SIDE? ...MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE SHOULD CAREFULLY

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CONSIDER THIS QUESTION BEFORE THEY CAST THEIR VOTES."

4. THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE AND COMMUNIST PRESS CONTINUED TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT. ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE ESTIA ALLEGED THAT UNDER THE BYRD AMENDMENT THE EMBARGO COULD EVEN BE IMPOSED UPON GREECE IN THE FUTURE SINCE SHE WAS NOW CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR PROGRESS ON CYPRUS. REFERRING TO THE GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE SENATE VOTE, ESTIA LAMENTED THE FACT THAT THE STATEMENT WAS MADE AFTER THE VOTE RATHER THAN BEFORE WHEN IT COULD HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT. THE TIMING OF THE STATEMENT GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS ONLY PRO-FORMA, ESTIA CLAIMED, AND IN THAT CASE "SILENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER." RIGHT-WING ELEFTHEROS KOSMOS REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION IN ITS EDITORIAL ENTITLED "FAILURE." THE MOSCOW-ORIENTED COMMUNIST ORGAN RIZOSPASTIS SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WAS GETTING MORE ARMS IN RETURN FOR THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO, THEREBY FUELING THE ARMS RACE, IT WAS "GIVING IN TO AMERICAN BLACKMAIL". THE TIME HAD COME, RIZOSPASTIS EDITORIALIZED, FOR A NEW FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 6481

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. WE HAVE HAD NO APPROACH HERE FOR SECURITY "GUARANTEES." AND ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE PRESS REPORTS, WHICH WERE OBVIOUSLY BASED ON OFFICIAL BACKGROUNDING, SUGGEST THE GOG CAMPAIGN FOR THEM IS ALREADY UNDERWAY, IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT THE STORY WAS LEAKED IN ADVANCE AT LEAST IN PART TO COUNTER THE CRITICISM THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID LITTLE TO TRY AND INFLUENCE THE SENATE VOTE. KARAMANLIS IS APPARENTLY QUITE SENSITIVE ON THIS POINT. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PAPACONSTANTINOU TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THIS MORNING THAT THIS CRITICISM HAD HURT THE PRIME MINISTER. HOWEVER, KARAMANLIS, HE SAID, HAD BEEN DETERMINED TO ACT IN A STATESMANLIKE MANNER AND HAD REFRAINED FROM MAKING ANY KEEP-THE-EMBARGO STATEMENTS BEFORE THE SENATE VOTE IN ORDER NOT TO MAKE ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS WHICH THE ISSUE HAS STIMULATED ANY STRONGER.

6. THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THE SENATE VOTE HAD HAD THE EFFECT OF HURTING THE US IMAGE IN GREECE. IT HAD ALSO UNDERMINED THE PRESTIGE OF KARAMANLIS AND HIS GOVERNMENT. PAPACONSTANTINOU ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE BYRD AMENDMENT PROVISION REQUIRING THAT THE PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORTS ALSO COVER GREECE.
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THE GREEK PEOPLE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND, HE SAID, WHY GREECE AND CYPRUS WERE PUT ON THE SAME LEVEL AS TURKEY IN THIS RESPECT.

TURKEY HAD BEEN THE GUILTY PARTY IN CYPRUS AND THE EMBARGO HAD BEEN IMPOSED TO PUNISH IT FOR ITS VIOLATIONS OF US LAW. THE GREEKS SAW THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO AS THE REMOVAL OF PRESSURE ON THE TURKS TO BE LESS INTRANSIGENT ON CYPRUS. WE KEPT ASSURING THE GREEKS THAT THE EMBARGO HAD NOT WORKED AND BY LIFTING IT WE WOULD MAKE PROGRESS ON A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WENT ON, ECEVIT'S INITIAL RESPONSE HAD BEEN THAT IT WAS NOW UP TO THE GREEKS TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP. THIS IS NOT WHAT THE GREEKS UNDERSTOOD THE US HAD BEEN SAYING IN EXPLAINING WHY THE EMBARGO SHOULD BE LIFTED.

7. BEGIN COMMENT: PAPACONSTANTINOIS IS ONE OF PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS' CLOSEST ASSOCIATES AND CONFIDANT'S. WE BELIEVE THAT HIS EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER THE CO-RESPONSIBILITY FEATURE OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. OUR RELATIONS WITH GREECE ARE UNDERGOING NEW STRAINS AS WE GO THROUGH THE PROCESS OF LIFTING THE EMBARGO. THEY WILL BE STRAINED EVEN MORE SERIOUSLY, HOWEVER, IF AFTER THE EMBARGO IS LIFTED WE ARE SEEN TO BE APPLYING PRESSURE ON GREECE RATHER THAN TURKEY FOR CONCESSIONS IN THE SEARCH FOR A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT.

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